

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARIS 09768 062053 Z

45

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12 EB-11

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R 061756 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9027

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY ROME

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E. O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: EGEN, EEC, FR, UK

SUBJ: FRENCH PRESS ON BRITISH EUROPEAN POLICIES

SUMMARY: FRENCH PRESS HAS COMMENTED EXTENSIVELY DURING PAST SEVERAL DAYS ON UK'S CONDUCT DURING FIRST THREE MONTHS OF MEMBERSHIP IN EC. LE MODE AND LE FIGARO QUESTION WHETHER BRITISH CONSIDER THEMSELVES FULLY EUROPEAN AND POINT TO ALLEGED AMBIGUITIES IN BRITAIN'S EC POLICY. PRESS COMMENT HAS COINCIDED WITH AND TO SOME EXTENT BEEN SPARKED BY BRITISH AMBASSADOR'S APRIL 2 SPEECH ON BRITISH POLICIES TOWARD EUROPE AND US- EC RELATIONSHIP. PRESS HAS NOT BEEN REASSURED BY UK AMBASSADOR'S STATEMENT THAT LONDON'S FIRST PRIORITY IS NOW EUROPE AND HAS BEGUN TO QUESTION STRENGTH OF BRITISH COMMITMENT TO MONETARY UNION AND CAP.

1. THE FRENCH PRESS, LED BY PRESTIGIOUS LE MONDE AND LE FIGARO, HAS RECENTLY EXAMINED AT LENGTH THE BRITISH TRACK RECORD DURING FIRST THREE MONTHS OF UK MEMBERSHIP TO EC. BOTH LE MODE AND  
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LE FIGARO QUESTION WHETHER BRITISH ARE WILLING TO CONSIDER THEMSELVES FULLY EUROPEAN. THIS CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF BRITISH POLICIES HAS BEEN SPARKED BY A SERIES OF RECENT EVENTS, INCLUDING THE SQUABBLE OVER THE LOCATION OF THE EUROPEAN MONETARY FUND, THE RECENT AMSTERDAM CONFERENCE, THE CONTROVERSY OVER THE 1973-74 CAP PRICES, AND LONDON'S REFUSAL TO JOINT EC FLOAT.

2. SIR EDWARD TOMKINS, NEW BRITISH AMBASSADOR TO PARIS, GAVE A MAJOR SPEECH TO THE DIPLOMATIC PRESS ASSOCIATION ON APRIL 2. IN AN OBVIOUS EFFORT TO REASSURE THE FRENCH THAT THE BRITISH ARE PREPARED TO BEHAVE AS GOOD EUROPEANS SHOULD, SIR EDWARD SAID THAT " FOR LONDON, EUROPE IS NOW THE FIRST PRIORITY." BUT HE WENT ON TO UNDERSCORE THE IMPORTANCE OF STABLE AND HARMONIOUS RELATIONS BETWEEN THE U. S. AND EUROPE AND CALLED FOR A GENUINE US- EUROPEAN DIALOGUE. IN WHAT APPEARED TO BE AN INDIRECT REFERENCE TO CERTAIN FRENCH ATTITUDES, HE ALSO POINTED TO THE NEED TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN A COMMON EUROPEAN POSITION, WHICH IS INDISPENSABLE, AND AN ATTITUDE OF SUSPICION AND DEFENSIVENESS VIS- A- VIS THE US.

3. LE MONDE IN A FRONT PAGE EDITORIAL ON APRIL 4 ENTITLED " EUROPEAN AMBIGUITIES OF THE BRITISH", PROFESSED NOT TO BE COMPLETELY REASSURED BY THE AMBASSADOR'S STATEMENT THAT EUROPE IS NOW LONDON'S FIRST PRIORITY. LE MONDE SAID THAT THE BRITISH ATTEMPT TO BLOCK THE START OF THE EUROPEAN MONETARY FUND OVER THE ISSUE OF WHERE IT SHOULD BE LOCATED CALLED INTO QUESTION BRITAIN'S COMMITMENT TO MONETARY UNION. LE MONDE ALSO NOTED THAT SIR EDWARD " DISCREETLY SCOLDED" THOSE WHO TAKE A SUSPICIOUS AND DEFENSIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD THE US.

4. LE FIGARO IN A LENGTHY ARTICLE BY ITS LONDON CORRESPONDENT PIERRE BERTRAND, SHARPLY CRITICIZED SEVERAL ASPECTS OF WHAT HE TERMED BRITAIN'S AGGRESSIVE PERFORMANCE AS A NEW EC MEMBER. BERTRAND RECALLED A REMARK BY JEAN MONNET THAT ONCE THE BRITISH WERE IN THE EC THEY WOULD ACT AS THOUGH THEY HAD INVENTED IT. HE ADMITS THAT BRITAIN'S AGGRESSIVENESS HAS CERTAIN POSITIVE RESULTS, PARTICULARLY IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT WHERE THE BRITISH DELEGATION SEEKS TO GIVE THE PARLIAMENT A MEANINGFUL ROLE. BUT THE ARTICLE GOES ON TO CRITICIZE THE WAY THAT THE BRITISH HAVE CAPTURED A LARGE NUMBER OF KEY POSTS IN THE COMMISSION. THE WRITER ALSO RAISES THE QUESTION OF THE LOCATION OF THE EUROPEAN MONETARY FUNDS SAYING THAT THE BRITISH ACTION INDICATES THEY ARE WILLING TO REOPEN QUESTIONS SETTLED LONG AGO BY THE EC OF SIX.

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PAGE 03 PARIS 09768 062053 Z

5. LE FIGARO RESERVES ITS MAJOR CRITICISM, HOWEVER, FOR THE BRITISH STANCE ON THE FIXING OF CAP PRICES FOR 1973-74 AND THE CONTINUED UK REFUSAL TO JOIN THE EC CURRENCY FLOAT. BERTRAND NOTES THAT BRITAIN, PREOCCUPIED ITS BATTLE AGAINST INFLATION, OPPOSES EVEN THE MODEST 2.75 PERCENT INCREASE IN CAP PRICES RECOMMENDED BY THE COMMISSION. HE SAYS IT CAN BE ASKED TO WHAT EXTENT BRITAIN'S PRICE AND INCOMES POLICY MIGHT BE USED TO TORPEDO THE CAP FROM WITHIN THE ARTICLE POINTS OUT THAT WHATEVER THE REASONS FOR BRITAIN'S REFUSAL TO JOIN THE EC FLOAT, THE BRITISH ARE BENEFITING FROM A 12 PERCENT DEVALUATION IN THEIR EXPORTS TO THE EC.

6. BERTRAND CONCLUDES BY SAYING THAT THE DOMINANT ANGLO- AMERICAN CHARACTER OF THE RECENT AMSTERDAM CONFERENCE COULD LEAD SOME TO CONCLUDE THAT BRITAIN IS AN AMERICAN STALKING HORSE. IT WOULD BE MORE EXACT, HOWEVER, TO SAY THAT BRITISH POLICIES WITHIN THE EC ARE INSPIRED EXCLUSIVELY BY A " SACRED EGOISM."

7. COMMENT: WE HAVE NOT SEEN ANY INDICATION THUS FAR THAT THE EVENTS WHICH SPARKED THIS PRESS CRITICISM OF BRITISH POLICIES HAVE CAUSED ANY SIGNIFICANT STRAIN IN UK - FRENCH OFFICIAL RELATIONS. IT IS CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT THE CONTROVERSY OVER 1973 -74 CAP PRICES AND THE LONGER- TERM PROBLEM OF MODIFYING CAP MECHANISMS, WHICH BRITISH SPOKESMEN REPEATEDLY MENTION, CONTAIN A POTENTIAL FOR ANGLO- FRENCH CONFLICT.

DECONTROLLED FOLLOWING APRIL 30, 1974

IRWIN

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** n/a  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 06 APR 1973  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** boyleja  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1973PARIS09768  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** n/a  
**Errors:** n/a  
**Film Number:** n/a  
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**Image Path:**  
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**Line Count:** 149  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE  
**Office:** ACTION EUR  
**Original Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:**  
**Previous Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** boyleja  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 02 AUG 2001  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <02-Aug-2001 by reddocgw>; APPROVED <29-Aug-2001 by boyleja>  
**Review Markings:**

Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
30 JUN 2005

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** <DBA CORRECTED> gwr 971203  
**Subject:** FRENCH PRESS ON BRITISH EUROPEAN POLICIES  
**TAGS:** EGEN, FR, UK, EEC, EGEN  
**To:** BONN  
BRUSSELS  
COPENHAGEN  
DUBLIN  
EUR  
LONDON  
LUXEMBOURG

SECSTATE WASHDC  
THE HAGUE

**Type:** TE

**Markings:** Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005